

a first AC outlet at a first longitudinal end of the zone for providing a first AC output voltage;

a second AC outlet at a second longitudinal end of the zone for providing a second AC output voltage;

a switch disposed longitudinally between said first and second AC outlets, within said zone, for selecting one or the other of said AC outlets for use.

REMARKS

This paper is responsive to the Office Action mailed January 14, 2003. In that Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6, 19, 21, 22 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over applicant's disclosed prior art in view of U.S. Patent No. 4, 721,070 to Tanaka et al. For the following reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Initially, it will be noted that Tanaka discloses a portable engine-operated working machine having a control panel 8 as shown in Figure 1. The control panel has a pair of AC receptacles positioned immediately adjacent one another and indicated by reference numeral 8c. AC/DC output terminals AD are also disposed immediately adjacent the AC outlets 8c. A flange 8b extending from panel surface 8a includes frequency and output voltage indicators 8e and switches 8f positioned below indicators 8b. This is described in greater detail in column 4, lines 16-33.

The control panel disclosed in Tanaka, as described above, does not show or suggest the control panel set forth in claim 1 of the present application. Particularly, claim 1 calls for a first electrical outlet which is disposed adjacent a first longitudinal end of the second zone, and a second electrical outlet disposed adjacent a second

longitudinal end of the second zone, and a voltage selector switch disposed longitudinally inbetween said first and second electrical outlets for allowing the user to select either the first outlet or the second outlet for use. Tanaka et al does not disclose or suggest any such structure. In Tanaka, the two AC outlets 8c are positioned immediately adjacent one another with no form of selector disposed longitudinally in between these two outlets. In fact, no selector switch whatsoever is disposed in between the AC/DC outputs 8d, or inbetween the outputs 8d and outlets 8c. Furthermore, the function of switches 8f is not given in the specification. Presumably, however, this switch has nothing to do with being able to select one or the other of the outlets because the outlets 8c are not described as providing different voltage outputs.

In summary, there is absolutely nothing in Tanaka to suggest the unique control panel set forth in claim 1. It is a principal advantage of the control panel of claim 1 that the control panel has first and second electrical outlets disposed at opposite longitudinal ends of a given zone, and a switch for selecting the outlets which is disposed longitudinally in between the two outlets. This arrangement provides a very helpful grouping of the control panel elements to better ensure that the operator does not inadvertently select the wrong outlet for use. In fact, Tanaka does not appear concerned with this function whatsoever.

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that Tanaka does not render obvious Claim 1 of the present application. Claim 1 calls for limitations which cannot reasonably be said to be suggested by Tanaka. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103 rejection in view of Tanaka is therefore respectfully requested.

With regard to independent claim 19, for the reasons given above, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103 in view of Tanaka is also respectfully requested. Claim 19 specifically sets forth the two electrical outlets disposed adjacent opposite longitudinal ends of the second zone, with the switch disposed inbetween the two electrical outlets. Again, this structure is not shown or suggested by Tanaka.

Regarding dependent claims 2-8 and 20-27, in view of the amendments made to independent claims 1 and 19, it is believed that the rejection of these dependent claims has been rendered moot and reconsideration is requested.

The undersigned also gratefully acknowledges the conditional allowance of claims 5, 7, 8, 20, 23 and 27. However, the rewriting of these claims in independent form is being differed at this time pending the Examiner's review of the amended independent claims 1 and 19.

The undersigned gratefully acknowledges the allowance of claims 9-18 and 28-34.

Finally, new claim 35 is presented for review. It is believed that this claim is also allowable over the art of record.

It is believed that the entire office action has been carefully reviewed and that this paper is fully responsive thereto. If the Examiner has any further questions, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned at his earliest convenience at (248) 641-1600 to discuss same.

Respectfully submitted,

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